6 Simple Steps to Right-Size Your Exhibit for Maximum Productivity and Profit

By Jefferson Davis, Competitive Edge
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Introduction
The size of your exhibit determines the number of staffers you can have on duty, and thereby controls the number of attendee interactions your exhibit staff can execute. The exhibit staffing rule of thumb is one staffer per fifty square feet. So, a 10x10 booth should have a maximum of two exhibit staffers on duty. A 20x20 might have up to eight staffers.* Always be sure to consider the total amount of space, less exhibit properties, furnishings and displays.

With this knowledge consider your last trade show was your exhibit under or over staffed? This is the first step to create a right sizing formula.

Step 1. Identify your Ideal Visitor Profile.
Your Ideal Visitor Profile is a clear definition of who, out of all the show attendees, you want to visit your exhibit. It is usually a combination of 1) type of company or organization, 2) job function or title and 3) Geographic region. Additionally, if available from the show organizer, it might also include a pre-stated product interest.

To create your Ideal Visitor Profile, look at your exhibitor prospectus and the show’s attendee registration form. This will tell you who is attending and what type of demographic information the show organizer captures from attendees.

Step 2. Analyze the Show Audience.
Analyze show audience to determine the number of attendees matching your Ideal Visitor Profile. Share your Ideal Visitor Profile with your show account executive or exhibit sales person.

Ask them to give you as accurate of a count as possible of the number of attendees matching the profile you shared with them.

*Based on statistical data collected from CEIR, Exhibit Survey Inc. or proprietary information by Jefferson Davis.
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Step 3. Calculate your current Exhibit Interaction Capacity.

Exhibit Interaction Capacity is a formula successful exhibitors use to determine their capacity for face-to-face interaction in their exhibit.

This tells you that if you utilize 100% of your exhibit interaction capacity you can execute 432 face-to-face, one-to-one interactions in your booth.

**HERE’S THE FORMULA:**

\[
\text{Exhibit Activity Level capacity} = \frac{\text{Number of show hours}}{18\text{ exhibit hours over 3 days}} \times \frac{\text{Number of exhibit staff on duty}}{6\text{ staff on duty}} \times \frac{\text{Number of interactions/hour/staffer}}{4\text{ interaction per hour per staffer}}
\]

**Exhibit Activity Level capacity** = 432 interactions

Step 4. Contrast your calculated Exhibit Interaction Capacity with the number of attendees matching your Ideal Visitor Profile.

This is the critical step in determining if your exhibit is right sized. Your goal should be to create enough face-to-face interaction capacity to take full advantage of the tradeshow opportunity.

This example tells you that if you utilize 100% of your current Exhibit Interaction Capacity, you can only handle 18% of the attendees matching your Ideal Visitor Profile.

\[
\text{Number of attendees matching profile} = 2,342
\]

\[
\text{Exhibit Attraction Efficiency benchmark} = 0.45
\]

**Ideal Exhibit Interaction capacity** = 1,054

**HERE’S THE FORMULA:**

\[
\text{Ideal Exhibit Interaction capacity} = \text{Number of attendees matching profile} \times \text{Exhibit Attraction Efficiency benchmark}
\]

**Exhibit Attraction Efficiency benchmark** = 0.45

Step 5. Right-size your exhibit to ultimately create interaction capacity for 45% of the attendees matching your Ideal Visitor Profile.

Ultimately, the industry benchmark is to create enough interaction capacity to handle 45% of the attendees who match your profile. Exhibit Surveys Inc. over 30 years has found that the average exhibitor studied attracts 45% of their profile match to their exhibit.*

This example tells you that ideally, you should create enough interaction capacity to handle 1,054 attendees in your exhibit.

**HERE’S THE FORMULA:**

\[
\text{Number of attendees matching profile} = 2,342
\]

\[
\text{Exhibit Attraction Efficiency benchmark} = 0.45
\]

**Ideal Exhibit Interaction capacity** = 1,054

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So, how do we determine how to right size our exhibit?

**HERE’S THE FORMULA:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>IDEAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Show Hours</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Exhibit Staff on Duty</td>
<td>x 6</td>
<td>x 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Interactions/Hour/Staffer</td>
<td>x 4</td>
<td>x 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibit Activity Level Capacity</td>
<td>432 interactions</td>
<td>1,080 interactions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To be right-sized we need enough space and staff to accommodate 1,080 attendees versus 432. This gives us capacity for 648 additional attendee interactions. To accommodate this, we will need fifteen booth staffers versus six. And three additional 10x10 spaces to accommodate both our additional staff and the additional attendees.

Think what an additional **648 face to face interactions** with the right type of attendee would mean to your company. That’s an exciting thought!

Obviously, you are going to need to invest more financial and human resources to right-size your exhibit. And justifying the additional investment is important. So, let’s take a quick look at the additional costs, verses reaching these buyer through individual sales calls.

### Right-sizing Incremental Cost Estimate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Description</th>
<th>Cost Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Floor Space ($2,500 x 3 spaces)</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Staff: Travel/Lodging/Meals ($400 day x 3 x 6)</td>
<td>$7,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Cost Estimate</td>
<td>$14,700 +/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Divide by number of additional attendee interactions: 432 interactions = 648

Cost per additional attendee interaction = $22.68

Armed with the per interaction cost we can contrast that with the typical in person field sales call cost and arrive at the soft dollars saving without even calculating the value of the sales that the additional customers interactions will inevitably provide.

### Soft Dollar Savings on Customer Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Description</th>
<th>Cost Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of a Field Sales Call</td>
<td>$596.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost/Additional Interaction</td>
<td>- $22.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings/Additional Interaction</td>
<td>$593.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Additional Interactions</td>
<td>x 648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Dollar Savings</td>
<td>$371,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incremental Investment</td>
<td>$14,700 +/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Dollar ROI</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wow, an additional investment of only $14,700 gives us $371,511 or a 25.3% soft dollar return investment? Now that’s what I call leverage!

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Jefferson Davis, president of Competitive Edge is known as the “Tradeshow Turnaround Artist”.
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The content of this report was produced by Jefferson Davis for the International Roofing Expo:

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For information about exhibiting at the upcoming International Roofing Expo, contact your account executive:

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